DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 103 040 JC 750 184

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TITLE	Portland Community College Takes an Educational X-Ray.
INSTITUTION	Portland Community Coll., Oreg.
PUB DATE	Jan 75
NOTE	16p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; *College Environment; *College Role; Educational Objectives; Educational Philosophy; Educational Policy; *Evaluation Methods; *Junior Colleges; Nonprofessional Personnel; *Participant Satisfaction; Questionnaires; Student Attitudes; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	Classified Staff Attitudes; Oregon; *Portland Community College

ABSTRACT

This study explored staff and student perceptions of Portland Community College; various attributes and functions of the college were rated for their importance and for level of success in performance. A 48-item questionnaire was handed out at random to four groups: 400 students, 65 instructors, 64 administrators, and 73 classified personnel. Responses were obtained from 163 (41 percent) of the students, 35 (54 percent) of the instructors, 48 (75 percent) of the administrators, and 40 (55 percent) of the classified personnel sampled, Responses from the various groups were remarkably consistent. All of the items, with the exception of number 6, "The college operates on an around-the-clock basis," were thought to be very important to the college's commitment. There was a close relationship between what the respondents thought important and how they felt the college was performing on 11 items. Responses to nine items indicate areas in which the college may need to improve; these items concerned staff orientation, inservice staff training, evaluation, and followup. The questionnaire and responses, as well as a random selection of comments made by respondents, are included. (Author/DC)

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PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE TAKES AN EDUCATIONAL X-RAY

by Amo De Bernardis

It is recognized that the people who staff the community college are the important element which enables the college to meet its commitment. How the staff perceives the college - its philosophy, its operation, its delivery system - is one measure of how well the college is carrying out its mission.

This is a study of how the staff and students at Portland Community College felt about the college, what they thought was important, and how they perceived the college to be performing on various facts of its operation. Too often there is a tendency to assess the quality of the college on the variety of its programs, the quality of its facilities, the degrees held by the staff, and the holdings in the library rather than by its primary mission, the instructional program. A college is a human institution made up of a variety of people providing educational services to the student. How the various people in the college perceive the college and how well they believe the college to be doing is probably closer to the true picture of the college than any other assessment. If the people perceive the college to be doing a good job, they will tend to react in a positive manner and the fulfillment of the college goals will become a reality. If the people believe that the college is not performing well, their beliefs will be reflected in their actions.

The writer developed a questionnaire which covered a broad range of items relative to the college's operation and philosophy. Many of the questions were concerned with some of the new thrusts and nontraditional approaches to the educational process. The list of questions was submitted to various staff members to check for completeness and to correct ambiguities. The items were edited according to the suggestions received, and 48 items were included in the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was then given to students in the writer's workshops and to various staff members in the college to clarify procedures and to determine the importance of the various questions. From the findings of this trial run, the final questionnaire was developed.

The questionnaire was constructed to allow the respondent to rate each item as to the degree of its importance: 1 - not important, to 5 - very important. He was then asked to rate the item on how well he thought the college was doing: 1 - not at all, to 5 - very well. It should be emphasized that the study was an attempt to determine how the respondent rated the importance of the items related to the college's operation and how he perceived the college to be performing.

The questionnaire was handed out at random to four groups: students, instructors, administrators, and classified personnel. Each person given a questionnaire was asked to respond and return the questionnaire unsigned and was encouraged to make additional comments.

The returns from the various groups were most gratifying, particularly since no attempt was made to follow up on questionnaires not returned. It was the writer's intent that each individual should not feel an obligation for returning the questionnaire. The numbers of questionnaires returned by the various groups are shown below.

Group	Out	Returned	Percent
Classified	73	40	55
Administrators	64	48	75
Instructors	65	35	54
Students	400	163	41

Findings

The results were tabulated and are shown in Table I. The left side of the table shows how the respondents rated each of the items as to its importance. It is interesting to note that all of the items on the questionnaire, with the exception of number 6, "The college operates on an around-the-clock basis," were perceived to be very important to the college's commitment. In regard to the lower rating of this question, it may be difficult for people brought up in the traditional five days a week, 180 day school year to perceive the college in a seven day, 12 month operation. When one considers that the college now operates on a six day, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., four quarter basis, it is interesting that respondents did not perceive it to be operating in this manner.

The right hand side of the table shows how the respondents perceive the college to be performing on each of the items. A review of items 1, 5, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 31, 45, and 46 shows a close relationship between what the respondents rated as being important to the college and how they felt the college was performing in these areas.

Items 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 38, 39, 40, and 41 indicate the areas where the college may need to improve. It should be noted that these items are concerned with staff orientation, inservice education for the staff, evaluation, and follow-up. These findings substantiate a recognized weakness of the college in its program of staff orientation and development.

As one studies the data it is interesting to see how consistent the various groups were on the items. Most of the items on the questionnaire were concerned with professional aspects of the college's operation, yet the non-professional staff, classified staff, and students had a good insight as to what was important and how they saw the college performing. The perceptions of the students and the classified personnel compared closely with those of the administrators and instructors.

Many took time to make comments on the questions or on related items of the college's programs. A random selection of the comments begins on page 12. The instructors made extensive statements; no doubt this was caused by the fact that many of the items in the questionnaire dealt with the teaching and learning process.

SUMMARY

If a college is to get a total perspective of its operation, it is important to assess how the various groups in the college perceive the college to be performing. If the college is to make needed corrections and keep up with the changing needs, these feelings and attitudes must be considered. Too often the emphasis is put on collecting information from the professional staff. The other groups are not generally considered. When one considers that approximately half of the staff of a community college is made up of classified personnel, it is important to assess their feelings and impressions of the college's commitment. The other large component of the college family is the students who are the customers. They are what the college is all about. The students' impressions and how they see the college operating for them are essestial in helping the college to determine how well it is meeting the students' needs.

This study is one approach to obtaining a profile on how the college is seen by its constituents. The instrument allows all persons in the college community to express their individual feelings on what they see as important and to rate the college on how they see it performing. The results of such a study can give all the staff a better perspective of strengths and weaknesses. It will give those responsible for making decisions for instruction, administration, and the support services an insight into areas which need attention.

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Portland Community College
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January, 1975

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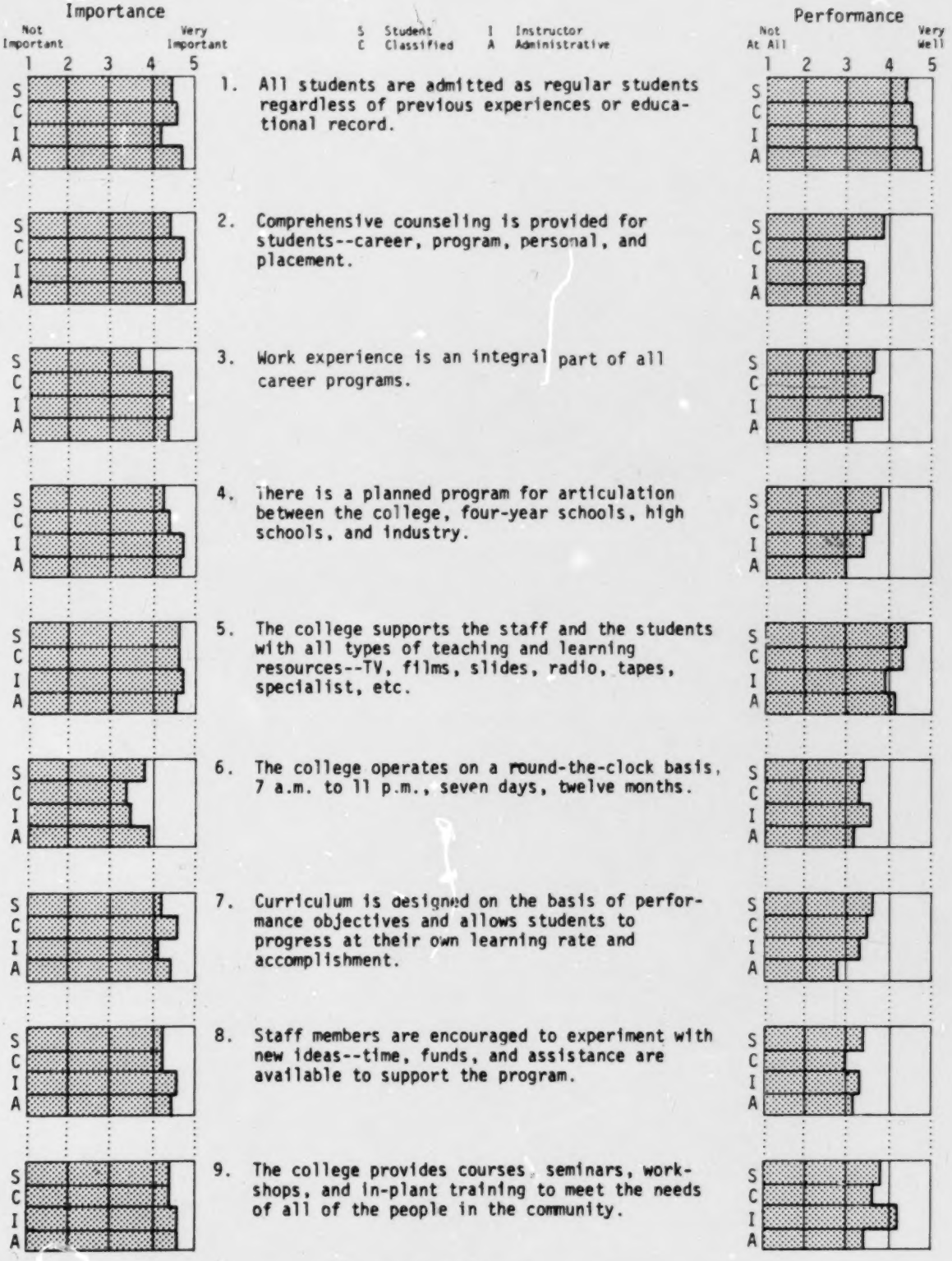
Table I
Tabulation of Responses to Questionnaire


Importance
Not Important
Very Important
1 2 3 4 5
S Student
C Classified
I Instructor
A Administrative
Performance
Not At All
Very Well
S C I A
1. All students are admitted as regular students regardless of previous experiences or educational record.
2. Comprehensive counseling is provided for students--career, program, personal, and placement.
3. Work experience is an integral part of all career programs.
4. There is a planned program for articulation between the college, four-year schools, high schools, and industry.
5. The college supports the staff and the students with all types of teaching and learning resources--TV, films, slides, radio, tapes, specialist, etc.
6. The college operates on a round-the-clock basis, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days, twelve months.
7. Curriculum is designed on the basis of performance objectives and allows students to progress at their own learning rate and accomplishment.
8. Staff members are encouraged to experiment with new ideas--time, funds, and assistance are available to support the program.
9. The college provides courses, seminars, workshops, and in-plant training to meet the needs of all of the people in the community.

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Importance

Not Important — Very Important

1 2 3 4 5

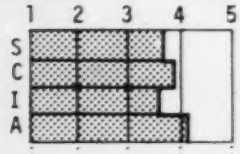
S Student
C Classified
I Instructor
A Administrative

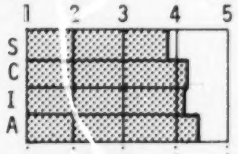
Performance

Not At All — Very Well

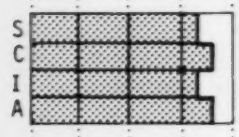
1 2 3 4 5

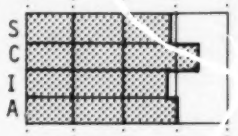
10. The college does not put students on academic probation or have academic dismissal.



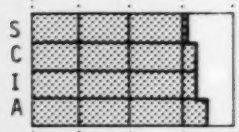


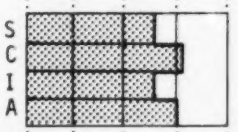
11. Students can challenge courses and receive full credit for those successfully challenged.



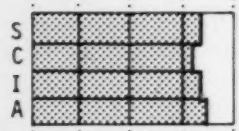


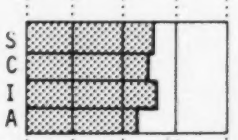
12. Advisory committees are an integral part of the process for developing and evaluating programs.



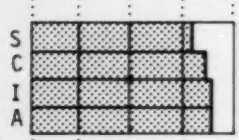


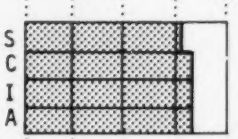
13. Student evaluation of classes, programs, and procedures is encouraged.



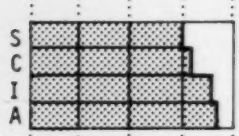


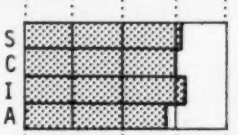
14. The college takes education to the people where they live and work. The community is the campus.



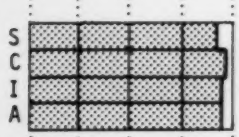


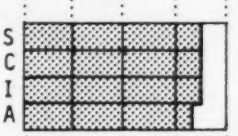
15. There is no status distinction between career, college transfer, and adult education programs.



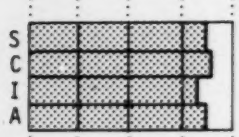


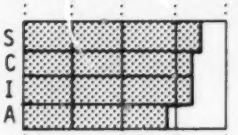
16. The college believes that each individual can learn and wants to learn.



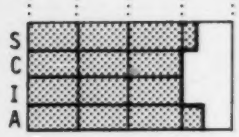


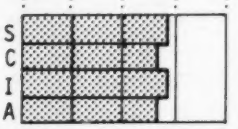
17. A student may enter, exit, and re-enter the college at any time.





18. The college is a home-away-from-home for students; and its design, programs, and facilities make it a desirable place for students.





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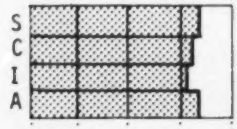
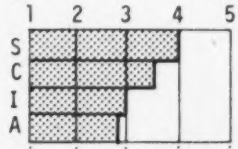
Importance — Not Important (1) to Very Important (5)

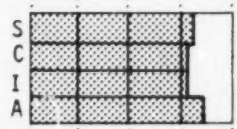
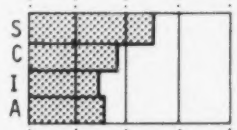
S Student I Instructor
C Classified A Administrative

Performance — Not At All (1) to Very Well (5)

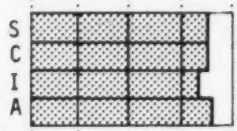
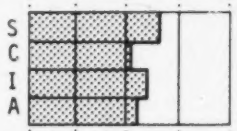
19. There is a planned program to obtain data on program costs and cost benefits, etc.

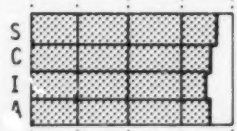
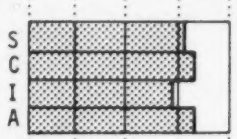
20. The college has a program for in-service education for all the staff.

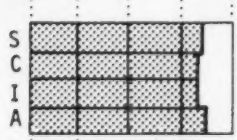
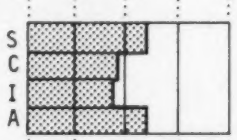
21. The college has a program for staff evaluation and improvement.

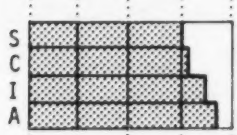
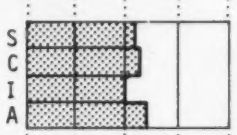
22. Facilities are designed to make instructors, administrators, and counselors easily available to the students.

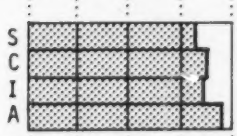
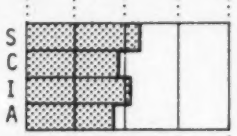
23. A system for processing complaints and suggestions from students and staff is in operation and used.

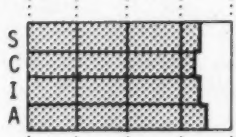
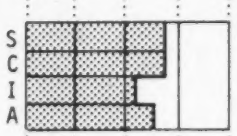
24. A follow-up on students is completed each year, and the data is used to make needed adjustments.

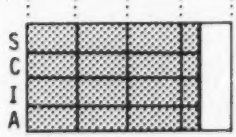
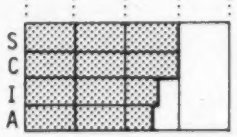
25. The college has an orientation plan for new staff members to help them become aware of what is expected of them as teachers, advisors, and instructional leaders.

26. The college attempts to tailor programs to fit each student's needs.

27. The teaching and learning process is adapted to the student's learning style. Extensive use is made of TV, radio, films, programmed materials, etc.

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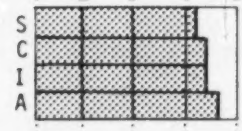
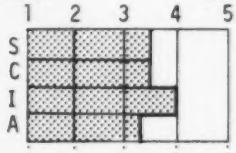
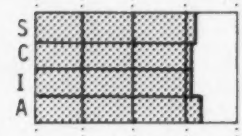
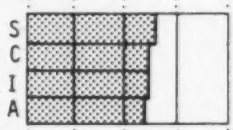
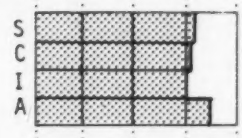
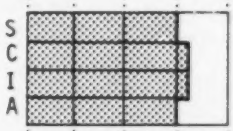
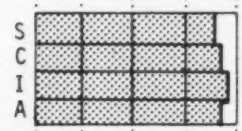
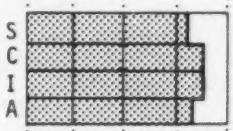
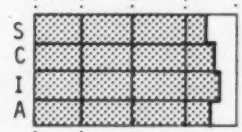
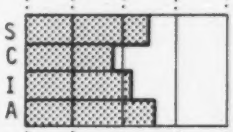
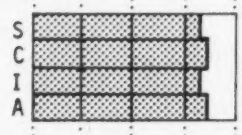
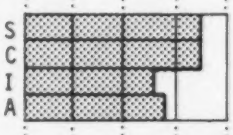
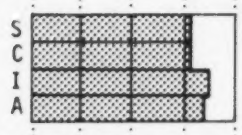
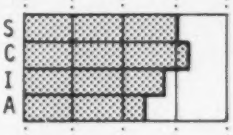
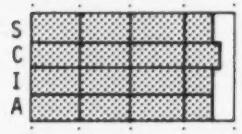
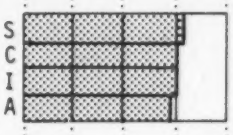
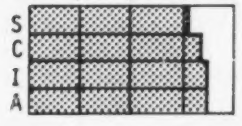
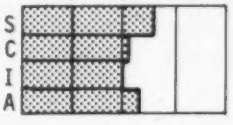
S Student I Instructor
C Classified A Administrative

Importance (Not Important 1 2 3 4 5 Very Important)		Performance (Not At All 1 2 3 4 5 Very Well)
	28. At least one-third of instructors' time is spent in counseling, advising, and helping students outside the classroom or laboratory.	
	29. The curriculum is student-centered rather than program-centered.	
	30. A student is allowed to repeat a class as many times as he chooses without penalty, until he successfully completes the course.	
	31. Students have many program options.	
	32. The salary schedule is designed to allow all to progress regardless of degrees. Performance is the criterion.	
	33. Students are not labeled or classified by types of programs--vocational, adult, college transfer, slow, gifted, etc.	
	34. General education is an integral part of all programs--it is more than a series of courses.	
	35. The college provides comprehensive student support services, counseling, placement, tutoring, advising, financial aid, health, etc.	
	36. There is a plan for involving all groups in the operation of the college--students, classified, instructional, administration, board, public.	

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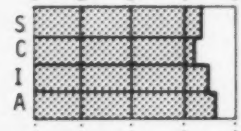
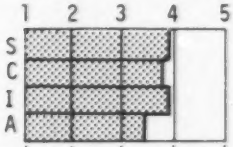
Importance — Not Important (1) to Very Important (5)

Performance — Not At All (1) to Very Well (5)

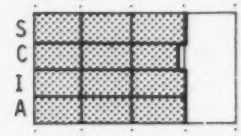
S Student C Classified I Instructor A Administrative

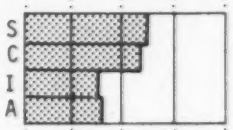
37. Student evaluation is based on performance criteria.



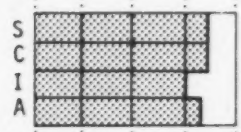


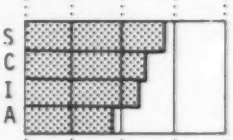
38. Differentiated staffing allows the instructor to act as a learning manager with aides and technicians to assist him.



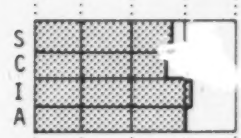


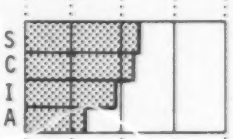
39. Core programs in broad areas allow students to explore careers before commitment to an career choice.



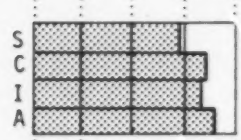


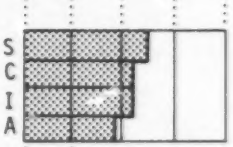
40. Educational audits are performed by people outside the college to evaluate programs and student performance.



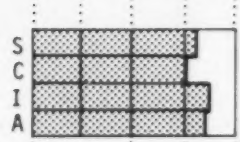


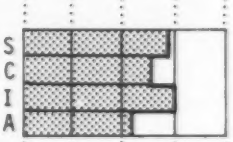
41. Accountability is stressed in all areas.



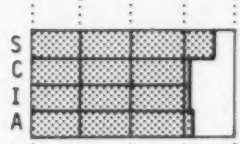


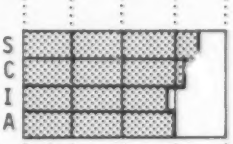
42. The community looks to the college to satisfy the cultural, recreational, commercial, and educational needs.



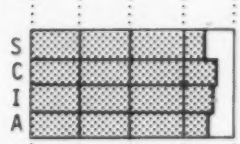


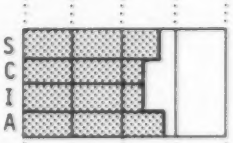
43. The student is able to move freely within a multi-campus system.



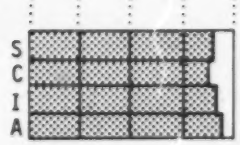


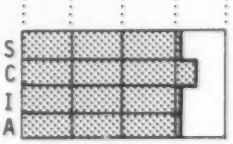
44. All staff members, including instructional, administrative, clerical, and maintenance, are chosen with equal care.





45. The college provides programs to correct basic educational deficiencies.





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Importance

Not Important — Very Important

1 2 3 4 5

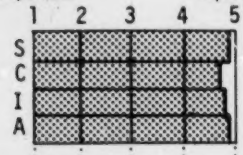
S Student
C Classified
I Instructor
A Administrative

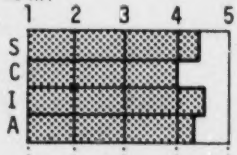
Performance

Not At All — Very Well

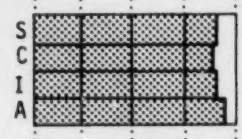
1 2 3 4 5

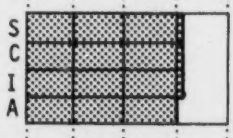
46. College programs adequately prepare students for entry level jobs or four-year colleges and universities.



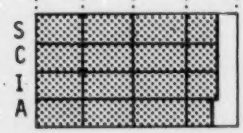


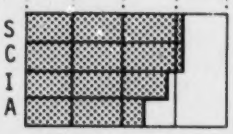
47. Emphasis is on learning rather than teaching.





48. Career, college transfer, and adult education courses are designed and scheduled to complement one another, thereby increasing learning opportunities for the students.





RANDOM SELECTION OF COMMENTS MADE BY RESPONDENTS

Administrators

Item 6: The college operates on a round-the-clock basis, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days, twelve months.

Response: Should be put into operation for all programs, especially Health Occupations. People who must work from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. must have opportunity to take any program.

Item 22: Facilities are designed to make instructors, administrators and counselors available to the students.

Response: Facilities are not designed to make administrators easily available to students.

Other Comments

Portland Community College probably most comprehensively oriented community college in State. Staff very dedicated. One main problem is lack of recognition for a job well done. If staff members told of their good work, even more dedication would be shown.

A more accurate assessment might result if several items were divided into their several components.

PCC can be proud of its accomplishments.

Classified Staff

No aid for buying books a common complaint.

More counseling personnel needed.

We still come closer to trying to do what we say we are doing than anyone else.

Lack of sense of belonging, making friends, in many full-time younger students. They need someone to help them along.

PCC has good rapport with community - often hear complimentary comments in stores, church, etc.

More stringent grades need to be given - more in line with 4-year colleges.

Classified Staff (Continued)

Impossible to have status distinction between career, college transfer and adult education programs.

Counselors need more information in college transfer area.

Instructors

Item 1: All students are admitted as regular students regardless of previous experiences or educational record.

Response: If we recognize that acceptance of Item 1 does not imply that a student can enter any curriculum he wishes when he wishes. He must recognize prerequisites. As it now stands, the college itself does not do this.

Response: The "open door" policy is too general - it has been possible for students to register and pay fees for a course in which they had no chance to succeed.

Other Comments

Have seen some limited follow-up studies on students, but am not aware of their influence in making adjustments.

Need more writing clinic classes.

Would like to see administration make a formal arrangement for staff and faculty to take advantage of self-enrichment possibilities during the day.

We have comprehensive counseling, but not enough students are aware of it.

This is the greatest learning institution of its kind. If it has a fault, it would be that the high school students in our district do not get the word (complete picture) of our great facilities - if they did, they would not go any other place.

Comprehensive counseling not adequate.

There is machinery to handle most desirable functions of the college, but a lack of faith or trust between administration and faculty that would allow either to function at their potential. We talk new programs, but those attempting new programs are looked upon with suspicion.

Challenging of courses is very limited - does the school impose these limits? Do we have the means of ascertaining successful challenge?

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Students

Comments

Really enjoy the college. Many teachers do not care about students and talk over their heads, but those who talk to students at their level are well liked.

Some of the needs to prepare for 4-year program have been vague.

Classes being offered in sequence do not allow much chance for student scheduling. Students who must support themselves by working in afternoons have a hard time getting needed classes.

There should be more information provided about how to challenge courses and where to do so.

Counseling could improve. More counselors and a definite place to find one would help. Transfer information is very difficult to get ahold of here.

Every instructor is very capable and interested in his students and will help those interested in improving their learning before, during and after class, 5 days a week.

The part-time teachers never allow for student evaluation. These teachers are the ones that need it most. Part-time teachers definitely need to be selected with a lot more care.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

APR 4 1975

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JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION